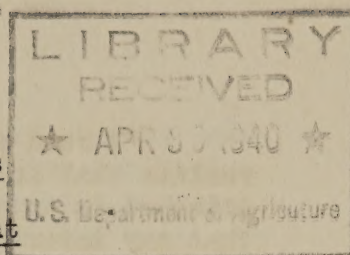


1.913
C 3 508
2 mo. 23 1940

United States Department of Agriculture
EXTENSION SERVICE
Washington, D. C.



Comments Made by Editors of Farm Papers

to Whom a Copy of WE GO FORWARD* Was Sent

Papers in Cotton-Producing Area

"A great many people long for the Extension Service to go back to what they call true extension work. What they have in mind is that the extension worker should spend all his time in helping farm people as individuals on such jobs as terracing, vaccinating hogs, etc. Insofar as I am concerned, I am glad the Extension Service has broadened its field to include all the problems of the farm and home, many of which must be solved through group action.

"If all the agencies now in the field working to solve farm problems could coordinate their work, I feel certain that even though the problems of southern agriculture are hard to solve, we would find a way to overcome them."

--Eugene Butler, Editor,
PROGRESSIVE FARMER AND SOUTHERN RURALIST,
Dallas, Texas.

"The economic problem of the rural South is almost insoluble, as I view it. We have an acute phase of it in eastern Oklahoma, in parts of which there are three to four times too many people in proportion to resources.

"What the South needs more than anything else is a prevalence of one- and two-child families. With the land growing poorer and the total number of persons growing larger, the thing simply doesn't figure out.

"I am just a little hopeful that the Farm Security Administration may ease the situation. But with the increase in population which is taking place and with the spread of the tractor which tends to force farmers off of the better land and on to the poorer land, we may create poor families faster than any agency can improve their lot.

"In all seriousness, I think the best thing we could do to alleviate the situation would be to inaugurate a campaign for definite limitation to the size of families in the South. Unless that is done, I anticipate the situation will grow no better for many years to come."

--Clarence Roberts, Editor,
THE FARMER-STOCKMAN,
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

*We Go Forward. An address by Reuben Brigham, Assistant Director of Extension Work, at Southern regional extension conferences, Texarkana, Ark., February 6, and Knoxville, Tenn., February 9, 1939. (Extension Service Circular 299, 17 pages, mimeographed, Washington, D. C., February 1939.)

"I read your address, "We Go Forward," with much interest, and realize that in the South the "farm problem" is of major proportions. Attached is an editorial which appeared in a recent issue of our paper that may interest you."

--H. E. Klinefelter, Editor,
THE MISSOURI FARMER,
Columbia, Missouri.

Papers in Corn Belt and Diversified-Farming Area

"I know so little about the Cotton Belt that I feel unqualified to comment, other than to give some personal reactions. You outline the problem effectively. In fact I would say it is a dismal picture you paint. One random idea was that we corn belters would have less objection to the AAA program boosting corn acreage a little down South if this picture of the southern situation were made known up here. Every time there's a flood or other disaster, when the Red Cross makes an appeal, whole trainloads of corn and other supplies are sent down there from this district. Have had stories and pictures of such gifts myself.

"You issue a challenge to the extension workers -- does the Extension Service have the brains and progressive ideals to cut down on cotton and plan a new system, a new day? I believe you have done it in a way to bring a reaction, a determination to try.

"But I am not sure that the route is clearly outlined. You say the service must aid local farm groups, develop local thinking and initiative, that there must be concerted action. There is even a hint that possibly present action is not concerted. But I am judging somewhat from conditions here, and must admit little knowledge of the South.

"Apparently your problem in the South is much worse than the farm problem up here. I am not sure, however, whether you have the farm organizations to help out with the work. If such a dismal outlook was presented for the Corn Belt, I believe that your message would start a general campaign of improvement. But in that case the message would go not only to extension workers, but to business men, Kiwanis Clubs, Lions Clubs, grain dealers, as well as Farm Bureaus, Farm Unions, and Granges. They would all turn on the public opinion, the propaganda, or whatever you call it.

"One thought, perhaps unfounded, is that the South has a different reaction, requires some different process, perhaps more dictation and less appeal for cooperation. My unfounded opinion is that the South reacts more directly to opinions and ideals of certain key men in each community than we do in Illinois. And also that those key men in the South are somewhat backward about exerting their influence in an effective manner, somewhat independent, perhaps selfish and nearsighted. Yet until the program can be "sold" to them, am afraid it can't go over very well. The

trend, more machinery, less sharecropping, more day labor, or more unemployment, will bring either a greater necessity of these key men taking the leadership in a general "improve southern agriculture" program or else troubles that will make the key men suffer along with the rest. So I can't help but think a better day is coming, eventually. Sometimes a situation has to get so bad before leadership develops and leads on to better days.

"I recall years ago a bunch of Arkansas bankers and farmers toured through here to study the McLean County system of swine sanitation. Men I interviewed said they had a new idea, an awakening. They also hinted that they were going to change things when they got back home.

"Perhaps one method now would be to encourage such tours, to districts where there are good illustrations of problems solved -- if you can find such districts!

"In solving that problem of poverty (Dr. Knapp's comment), you require desire and ambition, or else dictation. Again judging by Illinois reactions, I would say one weakness of the AAA is it gives emphasis to reduction rather than substitution. The average man is short-sighted in his policies. Perhaps it would be best to emphasize the substitutions more and the reductions less."

--Frank W. Bill, Agricultural Editor,
THE DAILY PANTAGRAPH,
Bloomington, Illinois.

"Reports have come to this office from various sources indicating a renewed interest in cooperative marketing on the part of our agricultural leaders in the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

"I am reminded of this in connection with your letter of the 9th, calling attention to talks presented to extension workers in Texas and Tennessee.

"I read with interest your comment and want you to know that I feel that you have presented a very sound program. We are confident, however, that the cooperative service properly directed and managed has more merit than the attention given during recent years would indicate. Just yesterday the Pure Milk Association here in Chicago, brought out a crowd of over 1,500 men and women, and at our recent meeting in Cincinnati at the Producers, there were more than 1,800 men and women who came to take part in the organization's affairs."

--J. D. Harper, Editor-Manager,
NATIONAL LIVESTOCK PRODUCER,
Chicago, Illinois.

"You shoot straight out at the basic problem in a way that makes me feel a new thrill of confidence.

"If we are to solve or I should say continue the good start that has been made in trying to solve the problem of the farmer we must absolutely take "the long view." These action programs are the "hard work" programs but they may not turn out to be so hard if the extension forces can just get the long view. Such talks as yours will certainly help them to do so.

"Think of only \$189 income per person per year in the last 14 years in the South! Even the \$404 figure for the Northern States is bad enough.

"'Adjust or adjourn.' That says it."

--Estes P. Taylor, Editor and Publisher,
AGRICULTURAL LEADERS' DIGEST,
Chicago, Illinois.

"I am anxious to see the Department get back at the business of doing more to promote sound cooperative organization work among farmers so they can help themselves instead of depending so much upon checks from the U. S. Treasury."

--Frank Ridgway, Agricultural Editor,
CHICAGO TRIBUNE,
Chicago, Illinois.

"Your analysis of the situation checks very accurately with my personal opinions. I am wondering, however, if cooperation alone will suffice along with sturdy individualism. The South must, in my opinion, elect men who are capable of cooperating with other regions of the United States. Frankly, my opinion of the Southern politician is very poor, granting certain exceptions. Disreputable as politics are, they must be our means of bringing about some of the changes that I believe are absolutely essential. Half a dozen statesmen from the South like Secretary Hull would produce wonders in that section in a few years."

--Kirk Fox, Editor,
SUCCESSFUL FARMING,
Des Moines, Iowa.

"I read with interest your manuscript from which you talked at Texarkana and Knoxville. In this you have pointed out many aggravating problems of the South which I observed in two trips that I have made in that section during the past 8 months.

"The cause of this condition is deeply rooted, and extends back through many years, and without appearing unduly pessimistic, it will require several more generations to right this wrong.

"In the first place, the social problem probably is based on classes of people whom we in the North do not consider. These people of the South have depended almost wholly on one crop, and now that cotton is experiencing difficulties, it has thrown out of balance their economic plan. However, it is noticeable that northern industries are moving south. I was informed that what is termed the lower class of white people and the negroes make fairly good industrial workers. This industrial South will throw out of joint our entire economic set-up unless wage adjustments are such that the North can compete with the South.

"On the other hand, as you know, considerable work is being done to educate the sharecropper to think of something other than cotton, namely, foods for home consumption. I am sure that the North will never begrudge the southern people whatever success they have along this line, for it builds a stronger citizenry.

"The work that is being carried on through the extension people from the national office on down to the county cannot be measured in dollars and cents, and certainly no department of Federal or State government is rendering greater service."

--Edmond C. Foust, Editor,
THE HOOSIER FARMER,
Indianapolis, Indiana.

"During the past decade I have been through the South about four times, and the thing that impressed me each time was that the South has plenty of agricultural opportunities for ambitious farmers but that very little advantage is being taken of the possibilities for producing a better living.

"It seems to me the place to start in developing a higher standard of living for the South is to grow a wider variety of food products for home consumption. Milk, butter, cheese, chickens, eggs, pork products, fruits, and vegetables can all be produced in abundance, yet you travel hundreds of miles through the South without seeing a good garden, dairy cows, hogs, pasture, and the diversification that apparently is so badly needed.

"You have emphasized these things in your address to extension workers most effectively."

--George Thiem, Editor,
ILLINOIS AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION RECORD,
Chicago, Illinois.

"The general idea that farm people should be encouraged to work out their own problems while cooperating to the fullest extent with their neighbors, seems to me exactly right."

--Arthur H. Jenkins, Editor,
FARM JOURNAL,
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

"You will recognize of course that in my opinion the present approach of Government to basic items on the farm problem (especially the South) is sadly inadequate and incompetent. Your assignment in the Extension Service is to take the tools you have to work with under the policies which are established, and do the best you can with them. It is obvious of course that while Extension has accomplished wonders (and I say that sincerely) in the last 20 years, still the total gains are by no means spectacular. In fact, in most situations, the agricultural condition is worse than it has been during this century. If it were not that Extension has accomplished as much as it has, I shudder to try to imagine the picture now.

"It is absolutely necessary that every possible step be taken as soon as possible to enable farmers to increase their production for such markets as already exist in the United States and to create new markets. This of course is not within the domain of Extension, although I do wish you were free to help make the agricultural public understand this and to demand it.

"Again let me say that I think you have made the most admirable statement of the extension program under present conditions. I am glad Extension still has in mind the mission as defined by Dr. Knapp."

--Wheeler McMillen, Editor-in-Chief,
FARM JOURNAL AND FARMER'S WIFE,
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

"I read this address with more than passing interest. What you say is too true. So many times have I wished that I had the power to do something to improve the agricultural income of the South. Many times have I made trips through the various Southern States, noting conditions. How often I have talked with Dr. Knapp and also his son, who recently passed away. Both of these men gave sound advice to the southern farmer; both were as intensely interested in rendering a service as any two men could be. How often have I heard them urge the farmers to plant a garden, keep a few chickens and pigs, and milk enough cows to supply their own table with milk and butter and perhaps a little cottage cheese.

"You speak about building a program for the South. Can you do any such thing for anyone? Maybe I am getting too critical concerning programs. We must first create a desire on the part of people to help themselves. It has been pretty well demonstrated that government can do little. The big thing for government to do is keep equal opportunity open to all, to help people to understand what must be done if they are to be reasonably successful.

"All of us would like higher prices for cotton, if it could be sold for higher prices, and at the same time find the southern farmer devoting himself to raising more of his food and feeds, to keeping a few chickens, a few pigs, and a cow or two, but higher prices for cotton will not solve the agricultural problem of the South. In some ways it only accentuates

it because if more money is received for cotton so that these people can buy the few simple things they want, they will not do the things they ought to do, and you extension workers know it as well as anyone else.

"Three years ago I made a 10 days' tour through Louisiana. On one farm the grass was knee high on the 28th of January. The farmer had been a county agent, and he was producing milk for Baton Rouge and doing well. A neighbor had a nice herd of Guernsey cows upon which I complimented him, whereupon he replied, 'Yes, they are nice cows but I'm going to get shet of them come spring. They're too much work.'

"Mr. Bateman in his talk at Madison this year said that the people of the South do not milk enough cows to supply their own tables. We all know that many thousands of cows could be kept in the South for providing families with milk, which would prevent pellagra, and not a pound of it would have to go on the commercial market.

"This letter may sound cruel. It isn't meant to be such, for if it were possible for me to spend the rest of my days in the South as the Knapps did and I could solve the problem of getting the people to see what they should do, I would devote myself to that task. There is nothing more satisfying to me than to see farmers do well or people who dwell on the land as a mode of life make a good living, even though they have not much money. The agricultural agent is an earnest, hard-working man. Programs have been provided, but the thing that stumps everyone is how to get the people living on the land, by and large, to do what they already know should be done."

--A. J. Glover, Editor,
HOARD'S DAIRYMAN,
Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin.

